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# THE LIBERATOR

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WM. LLOYD GARRISON, EDITOR.

TERMS.  
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## REFUGE OF OPPRESSION.

[From the Harrisburg Keystone.]

### GENERAL TOWN MEETING—ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

A very numerous and respectable meeting of the citizens of Reading, convened at the court house in this borough, on Wednesday evening, at 7 o'clock, to take into consideration the abolition of slavery.

Mr. Charles Kessler called the meeting to order, and nominated Samuel Board, President; Anthony Bicker, Andrew Kepner, Jacob Gehr, and George Till, were appointed Vice-Presidents, and Samuel Myers and D. A. H. Witman, Secretaries.

On motion, Messrs. J. H. Sayd, Wm. Reitz, George M. Keim, Daniel H. Bass, William Bonnel, H. B. Crouse, J. W. Roland, John Homan, Wm. Wonder, Dr. Mullerberg, Wm. H. Miller, C. K. Shell, John Goodhart, Wm. Lash, and J. Boyer, were appointed a committee to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of the meeting. The committee, after retiring for some time, reported the following, which were adopted with but one dissenting voice:

Whereas, the peace and safety of the American Union, is based upon the mutual concessions of the different states, in diversity of interests and reservations of rights and principles, constitutionally established, and inviolably to be sustained.

Whereas, the existence of slavery from the commencement of the government, imposed upon the community before the revolution, as well by legislation as from an unavoidable necessity, and now from those circumstances being congenial to the comfort and happiness of a great portion of the citizens of the United States; and,

Whereas, the country is about being agitated by factitious objections to its continuance, without reference to the manner, or even the prudent consideration of the consequences of immediate abolition, and,

Whereas, it is apparent that the course pursued by the heedless and demented zealots with regard to the slaves of the south, unless soon arrested, will lead to dreadful results, and perhaps deluge the country with bloody warfare and barbarous atrocities;

Whereas, the attempts of superficial religious to interfere with the domestic establishments of the south, and array one section of the government against another, is an evil greatly to be deplored and deprecated, and will sooner or later overthrow and demolish the fair fabric of our Union. Therefore,

Resolved, That we repudiate the wild and fanatical schemes and doctrines disseminated by the bold and do-atmos, dangerous in themselves, and fraught with evil, not only to the whole country, but also to the very object whose condition would alleviate.

Resolved, That we cannot unite with, or countenance those persons who are endeavoring to deprive the souls of those solemn rights and privileges which pertain to them, and are firmly granted to them by the Constitution of the United States.

Resolved, That we regard the question of slavery as a matter wholly and entirely belonging to the slaveholding states, who alone reap the benefits or suffer the evils connected with its existence, and who are themselves capable, without foreign interference, of regulating it.

Resolved, That as citizens of Pennsylvania, we assure our brethren of the south, that we will, on all proper occasions, advocate and aid them in the preservation of their rights guaranteed by the sacred character of the Union.

Resolved, That we have just cause for censoring the conduct of certain individuals residing in this borough, who, without the shadow of authority, presented themselves as delegates from Berks county in the convention held at Harrisburg, thereby deceiving said convention, and insulting our citizens, who indignantly disclaim any lot or part in its proceedings.

Resolved, That we heartily applaud the overwhelming majority of our legislature who refused to permit the representative chamber to be sullied by the presence of those who are using their efforts to light the torch of servile war throughout the whole of our now prosperous and happy Union.

Resolved, That the effort now making by several legislators, to extend the trial by jury to absconding slaves, is an inroad upon the constitutional compact, which will inundate our commonwealth with negroes, and fill our courts with trials, whose only result must be the introduction of a worthless class of beings, only tolerated where they are provided for, and not equal to the effort of maintaining themselves.

Resolved, That we view with abhorrence and disgust, the sentiments expressed in the abolition convention at Harrisburg, that 'the prejudice so long and extensively cherished against our colored brethren, is itself a sin, which may and ought to be instantly abandoned; inasmuch as we believe the prejudice, if it be one, wisely implanted by nature herself, growing with our growth, and strengthening with our strength.'

Resolved, That we denounce the originators of abolition to be British emissaries and southern nullifiers, the one the enemies of popular government, the other the advocates of a dissolution of the Union, both uniting in the infamous object of spreading anarchy and division among a hitherto united people.

Resolved, That the proceedings be signed by the officers, and a copy thereof be forwarded to our member of Congress.

On motion, Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be published in all the papers in Berks county, in the Globe at Washington city, the daily papers in Philadelphia, and in the Harrisburg Daily.

**The Sulpus Revenue.**—The Orleans American proposes that the Sulpus Revenue be appropriated in payment to the South for their slaves, according to their fair valuation and let them go free.

There are three difficulties attending this proposition:

1st. The government will not consent to make the appropriation. There is too much slavery and pro-slavery in the country for such a measure.

2. If compensation were offered the South for their slaves, they would not accept. They do not wish slavery to cease.

3d. If the freedom of the slaves were obtained in this way, they would be trodden down among us, or driven from the country by the spirit of prejudice and oppression that has grown up with slavery. Their freedom will be worth little to them until the people are willing to do them justice and the people treat them as men. When this is the case, no compensation will be required for that which has been obtained and held in inquiry.

**A Bloody Row.**—A correspondent of the Detroit Spectator writes from Pontiac, under date of Sunday evening: "I have just returned from witnessing one of the wildest scenes of riot and outrage that I ever heard of in this country. I have barely time to say that the windows of the church were demolished—pistols, dirks, and sword cases were used—and the impressions uttered—the sheriffs' pose and cut—order finally restored. &c. A lecture on the subject of Slavery, by Professor A. Cole, of Ohio, was the subject matter of the discussion."



# THE LIBERATOR.

VOL. VII.

OUR COUNTRY IS THE WORLD-OUT.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.]

## CONGRESS.

[REPORTED BY THE EDITOR OF THE BOSTON DAILY ADVOCATE.]

**SPEECH OF MR. LINCOLN,**  
*Of Massachusetts, in the House of Representatives, Feb. 7, on the Resolutions to censure the Hon. John Quincy Adams, for inquiring of the Speaker, whether a paper purporting to come from slaves, come within the Resolution laying on the table all petitions, &c. relating to slavery.*

MR. SPEAKER.—

It may seem the extreme of rashness, that I attempt to oppose, by my humble efforts, the torrent of invective which is pouring forth from every quarter of this House, upon the devoted bosom of my venerable colleague. It was alike my intention to take no part in this debate, and my wish to keep free from the excitement to which it might lead;—But, whatever my original purpose, I can no longer consent to remain silent when the subject before the House assumes the form of direct censure upon my colleague, for an act which he deliberately and solemnly declares he conscientiously believed to be in discharge of his representative duty. Such is the reverence due to his age, such the respect paid to his character, and the remembrance of his public services, so high the confidence in his integrity, and in the purity and patriotism of his motives, so beloved and honored is he at home, and so known to fame abroad; that, whatever may be the result of this discussion, whatever the action of this House upon these extraordinary Resolutions, there are those, and they are not a few, here and elsewhere, who will deeply sympathize with him in the trial to which he is now informally subjected. But, Mr. Speaker, it may not unreasonably be posited that the exception is taken to the charge of his memorials that are to the manner of present them. If the charge of trifling with the House is intended, wherefore the manner of my colleague? This enquiry I will not undertake to answer. It may be matter of taste, estimate of judgment with my colleague. His man is not my man, [nor do I see in the better sense of his, an encouragement to me for its adoption.] But, Mr. Speaker, it may not unreasonably be posited that the exception is taken to the charge of his memorials that are to the manner of present them. If the charge of trifling with the House is intended, wherefore the manner of my colleague?

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Mr. Speaker.—

*Loose to an idea.* (Laugh.) I will not say a word upon that charge in the indictment against me. The gentleman from Maine, (Mr. Evans) has so keenly exposed it to the ridicule it deserves, that those who introduced it cannot desire to hear any thing more said upon that subject.

Sir, there was, for once in this House, a remarkable unanimity between gentlemen found in opposition to each other on all other questions. A gentleman, whose speeches on this floor have not caused him to be regarded as the most devoted friend of this Administration, (Mr. Waddy Thompson of S. C.) proposed his resolution of censure. A devoted friend of the Administration (Mr. Dromgoole of Va.) proposed an amendment which the gentleman from S. Carolina accepted at once, and that was to cause me for giving color to an idea! Sir, it was in vain that I rose, and gave the gentlemen the sober advice to attend a little more to their facts. The moment I attempted to explain, and set aside all their assumed facts, whic'h there came another resolution of censure, charging me with trifling with the House. It was not what I did, but, what I did not.

I did not get up soon enough, it seems, to show these gentlemen the best way to censure me, and enable them to correct their resolutions which they had brought forward with such zeal and in such rapid succession, but in which, unfortunately for them, there was not one word of truth.

When I say there was not one word of truth in the resolutions of the gentlemen from S. Carolina and Alabama, I do not call in question their veracity. There are no men in whose veracity I would sooner trust my life; but I tell them that when they undertake to charge a member of this House, who never gave them the slightest cause of offence, with crimes that should draw down upon him the censure of this body, without first ascertaining the facts, they have stepped beyond the bounds of discretion and propriety; and I will give them one word of advice—that when they draw up resolutions to censure me, they should first be careful to pay a little attention to facts.

[This allusion brought Mr. Lewis and Mr. Thompson both on their feet. Mr. Lewis of Alabama, said that he came into the House in the midst of the excitement, and an inquiry was told that the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Adams, had attempted to present a petition from slaves. He took it for granted it was a petition for abolition, and it was full two hours before he understood that it was of a different character. Had he known the object of the petition, he should not have offered the resolution.]

Mr. Adams—Sir I very readily admit the explanation of the gentleman. He took for granted what happened not to be true. But I do not intend the slightest disrespect to the gentleman. I only take the occasion to give them a little advice, the advice of an old man to ardent young men, to govern their future conduct in this House when they undertake to censure their colleagues. But I want another explanation from the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Waddy Thompson,) and I want to know if the language I find here reported in the Intelligencer as his, is really the expression of his liberate opinion? [Mr. Thompson rose to explain.]

Mr. Adams—I shall want an explanation of another matter from the gentleman, and he may explain both when I have stated it fully. I read from the report of that gentleman's remarks in the National Intelligencer:

"Does the gentleman, even in the latitude which he gives to the right of petition, think that it includes also that he does, in fact, has wilfully violated the rules of the House, and the feelings of its members?

[Mr. Thompson was on his legs again to explain. Mr. Adams—I have done yet. There is more of it to come. He then continued reading—]

"Does that gentleman think that there are laws in all the states, and here, for the punishment of those who excite insurrection? and to that end that the laws such things as *Grand Juries*, and Sir, the Juries of this District have, as I doubt, not they have, proper intelligence and spirit, may yet be made amenable to another tribunal, and we may yet see an incendiary brought to cognizance punishment?"

[Mr. Waddy Thompson was now permitted to explain. He stated he had thought there was not a human being who believed that slaves had a right to petition, until he heard with astonishment, that gentleman avow'd that he held that slaves had a right to petition. As to the other portion of what the gentleman had said, at the time the remark was made, he (Mr. T.) understood that the paper he called the attention of the House to, was a petition from slaves for the abolition of slavery. The right by which the national Representative holds his seat here, is of vital importance, and, that it must be understood, I hope that this debate will go forth and be read by the whole people, and that, among other remarkable things, they will mark this thread of the gentleman from South Carolina.

Sir, we have heard much of the great superiority of Anglo-Saxon blood. Is there a man living, with a drop of that blood in his veins, who will subscribe to this doctrine of the member from South Carolina? Are these the principles of freedom by which to regulate the deliberations of a Legislative Assembly? I ask any member of this House what he thinks would be the issue, if a member of the British House of Commons should rise in his place, and tell another member that for words spoken there he should be held amenable to a Grand Jury of Westminster? Sir, it would be considered too ridiculous for indignation: it would be received with one universal shout of laughter, and from thenceforth subject the author of such a measure to be held up,

*'Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,  
And the sad burden of some merry song.'*"

(Laughter.) Arraigned, as I have been, Mr. Speaker, on such a variety of charges, changing their ground in such rapid succession, it has been impossible to make my defense with any system or order. All that I say is unavoidably desultory.—Whenever my accusers presented *'the color of an idea'*, before I could fix it, it was gone, and other ideas of other colors presented in its stead. The gentlemen have performed their parts here like those persons known in theatrical companies by the name of actors of all work, who assume many characters in the same play, and change their dresses so often, that you never know it is the same actor that comes in, in so many different parts, all so unlike. Sir, has it been in the rapid changes of the gentlemen, who, in a variety of characters, have arraigned me as a criminal to be brought to bar, on the charge of gross contempt, *'for giving color to an idea'*? How can I reply to such a charge, or how defend myself against the allegation of such a crime? Such are the attempts made to bring down upon my head, the indignation and censure of this House; a calamity, sir, which I should regard as the heaviest misfortune of a long life, checked as it has been by many and severe vicissitudes. Yes, sir, I avow, that if a vote of censure should pass upon my name, for having committed in this House, it would be the heaviest of all calamities that have ever befallen me.

Sir, am I guilty, have I ever been guilty of contempt to this House? Have I not guarded the honor of this House as a cherished sentiment of my heart? Have I not respected this House as the Representatives of the whole people of the whole Union? Have I ever been regardless of the great representative principle of the people, here exhibited? Have I ever been wanting, as a member of this body, in a proper *'esprit de corps'*? Have I not defended the honor of this House on more than one occasion? Was I not the first, on a former occasion, to vindicate members of this House from the charge of being susceptible to bribery and corruption, a charge coming from one whom the majority were most devout? Have I not defended this House from charges from another quarter, to which I wish not to allude? And am I now to be censured for doing what I have not done, or for not doing what I did not do, under pretense of a contempt of this House, in an act which was done from motives of the highest possible respect to this House? for never, in any act of my life, did I more consult the respect due to this House, than in proposing the question I put to the Speaker that paper from slaves.

Sit, if he is an enemy who shall succeed in bringing down upon me, directly or indirectly, the censure of this House; I say, if he be an enemy who votes for this, let him know he has his revenge, his triumph; for a heavier calamity could never fall upon me on earth!

And this brings me to the Resolutions before the House. I object to the first Resolution, (offered by Mr. Patton of Va.), because it does not meet and answer my question. Let the question

be put, by yeas and nays, and I am willing to record my *'yea'*, that it is the duty of the House to receive petitions from slaves, and I shall regard it as of high import to free institutions, if, on full deliberation, the House refuse to say that they will receive petitions from slaves. The resolution does not say whether they will or not. That question, and the only question really before the House, is not met. We do not know whether it is proper or not to present such petitions. But suppose it is proper. Can there be any offence, before the House have settled or considered that question, for a member respectfully to ask whether it be proper? Now, sir, this question is not met, and that is my objection to the first Resolution.

The second Resolution touches neither my question nor me, but pounces on an ideal man. It says, 'every member who shall hereafter present such petition' ought to be considered an enemy to the Union, &c. What is that, sir, but the same threat, indirectly made, which the member from South Carolina (Mr. Waddy Thompson) directly made, of sending the man who should present such a petition, to the Grand Jury of the District of Columbia? This Resolution declares that the member who shall hereafter make an attempt to present any such petition, shall be held *infamous*. Is this another maxim of the slaveholding representatives, touching the freedom of speech in this House? Sir, if that Resolution passes, I will submit to it so far as not to present any petitions of slaves, but I shall consider it as a Resolution most disgraceful and dishonorable to this House. The members from New England, from the free western States, amenable to Grand Juries of the District of Columbia for their acts as Representatives! liable to be tried as felons and punished as incendiaries, for presenting or giving *'color to an idea'* that they may present petitions not exactly agreeable to certain gentlemen from the South? Sir, if that is the condition upon which we hold our seats here, and exercise our functions as the representatives of our constituents, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Wise) has anticipated me in what I had to say; and that is, that if Grand Juries, constituted as they will be, if they are to be made the avengers of whatever may be said or done in this House, how long will it be before the gentleman from South Carolina himself, (Mr. Waddy Thompson) will have to answer before a Grand and Petit Jury of the District, as an incendiary, for words spoken here against the Executive? And I ask him with what firmness or freedom he could resist Executive power, if for every word he utters, he is to be held amenable to a Grand Jury, selected by the Marshal, an officer appointed by the President? Let that gentleman, let every member of this House, ask his own heart, with what confidence, with what boldness, with what freedom, with what firmness, he would give utterance to his opinions on this floor if for every word, for a mere question asked of the Speaker, involving a question belonging to human freedom, to the rights of man, was liable to be tried as a felon or an incendiary, and sent to the Penitentiary? And this jury, selected by an officer of the President, are to be the supreme Judges of the sovereign American people, in the person of their Representatives? Such is the avowed doctrine of the gentleman from South Carolina; such are his notions of freedom of speech and of civil liberty!

I have dwelt long on this topic, and will abridge what I had to say of other matters brought into this debate. I might, perhaps, have been willing to have had the yeas and nays taken on this resolution to censure me, without saying one word; but it was impossible for me to remain silent without calling on the House to mark and repeat this sentiment avowed by the gentleman from South Carolina. I could not pass over such a sentiment uttered on this floor, and not, as it ought to have been, at once put down by the Speaker.

Sir, I do not know how far the Southern gentlemen will endorse that sentiment. Probably I never shall know. What have I said and more than I have time to say, has been called for by an imperative sense of duty, as I regard it, when such a threat as this has been uttered, though by but a single member of this House.

Sir, I am content that this whole debate should go forth as it has been begun in the National Intelligencer. I am willing that my constituents, the people of this nation, the world, and all after times, should judge of me and my action on this great moral question. And here I say, that I have not done one single thing I would not do again, under like circumstances—not one thing have I done that I have not done under the highest and most solemn sense of duty.

But it is said that I have trifled with the House. That I do not, I have disclaimed, I again disclaim any such intention. No, sir, I had a higher purpose than trifling with this House, and having disclosed such intention, no man has a right to censure me with it. Sir, I never acted under a more solemn sense of duty. I never was more serious in an moment of my life. I take it, therefore, that the last resolution, excusing and forgiving me, will not pass. It is founded on a supposition of disclaimer and retraction on my part. Sir, I renounce all favor from this House on the ground of disclaimer or retraction. I have disclaimed nothing I have done, and I have retracted nothing. I have done my duty, and I should do it again, under the same circumstances, if it were to be done to-morrow!

Members of this House have accused me of consuming the time of the House by presenting Abolition petitions. Is it or they who have done this? If, Sir, gentlemen who are opposed to these petitions had permitted them to pass to the table under the rule, no time would have been consumed. I have not crept the rumor. I did not believe there were those in this peaceful, christian village, who would thus attempt to trample upon the rights of freemen—but I judged. The cannon was brought from Belcherown to Amherst, in broad day-light. And for what? To dragoon the Abolitionists into their duty, footloose. Tell it not in Gath. In the Old County F. Hampshire, the heart of New England, freemasonry not assemble in the house of God and listen to minister of the gospel, while discussing a moral subject, without having a riotous rabble turned loose upon them!

A plot of ground was cleared of snow in front of the church—the gun was planted, and all things arranged in such a manner as most to disturb the meeting. After the exercises of the evening were commenced, these intrepid lovers of order, who were unwilling that any one should plead the question of the Speaker. He asked it of the House, and if there was contempt or crime in either case, which was the greater?

Sir, I am content that this whole debate should go forth as it has been begun in the National Intelligencer.

Did the gentleman think he could frighten me from my purpose by his threat of a Grand Jury? If that was his object, let me tell him he *'misleads his man'*. I am not to be frightened from the discharge of my duty by the indignation of the gentleman from South Carolina, nor by all the Grand Juries in the Universe. The right by which the national Representative holds his seat here, is of vital importance, and, that it must be understood, I hope that this debate will go forth and be read by the whole people, and that, among other remarkable things, they will mark this thread of the gentleman from South Carolina.

Sir, we have heard much of the great superiority of Anglo-Saxon blood. Is there a man living, with a drop of that blood in his veins, who will subscribe to this doctrine of the member from South Carolina?

Are these the principles of freedom by which to regulate the deliberations of a Legislative Assembly?

I ask any member of this House what he thinks would be the issue, if a member of the British House of Commons should rise in his place, and tell another member that for words spoken there he should be held amenable to a Grand Jury of Westminster?

Sir, it would be considered too ridiculous for indignation: it would be received with one universal shout of laughter, and from thenceforth subject the author of such a measure to be held up,

*'Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,  
And the sad burden of some merry song.'*"

(Laughter.) Arraigned, as I have been, Mr. Speaker, on such a variety of charges, changing their ground in such rapid succession, it has been impossible to make my defense with any system or order. All that I say is unavoidably desultory.—Whenever my accusers presented *'the color of an idea'*, before I could fix it, it was gone, and other ideas of other colors presented in its stead. The gentlemen have performed their parts here like those persons known in theatrical companies by the name of actors of all work, who assume many characters in the same play, and change their dresses so often, that you never know it is the same actor that comes in, in so many different parts, all so unlike. Sir, has it been in the rapid changes of the gentlemen, who, in a variety of characters, have arraigned me as a criminal to be brought to bar, on the charge of gross contempt, *'for giving color to an idea'*? How can I reply to such a charge, or how defend myself against the allegation of such a crime? Such are the attempts made to bring down upon my head, the indignation and censure of this House; a calamity, sir, which I should regard as the heaviest misfortune of a long life, checked as it has been by many and severe vicissitudes. Yes, sir, I avow, that if a vote of censure should pass upon my name, for having committed in this House, it would be the heaviest of all calamities that have ever befallen me.

Sir, am I guilty, have I ever been guilty of contempt to this House? Have I not guarded the honor of this House as a cherished sentiment of my heart? Have I not respected this House as the Representatives of the whole people of the whole Union?

Have I ever been regardless of the great representative principle of the people, here exhibited?

Have I ever been wanting, as a member of this body, in a proper *'esprit de corps'*?

Have I not defended the honor of this House on more than one occasion?

Was I not the first, on a former occasion, to vindicate members of this House from the charge of being susceptible to bribery and corruption, a charge coming from one whom the majority were most devout?

Have I not defended this House from charges from another quarter, to which I wish not to allude?

And am I now to be censured for doing what I have not done, or for not doing what I did not do, under pretense of a contempt of this House, in an act which was done from motives of the highest possible respect to this House?

For never, in any act of my life, did I more consult the respect due to this House, than in proposing the question I put to the Speaker that paper from slaves.

Sit, if he is an enemy who shall succeed in bringing down upon me, directly or indirectly, the censure of this House; I say, if he be an enemy who votes for this, let him know he has his revenge, his triumph; for a heavier calamity could never fall upon me on earth!

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